

FIRE HORROR ENDS CHRISTMAS PLANS

William Glazier, Now Telephone Operator, Describes Two Holidays in Hospital

BUREAU'S 'JIMMY KEATH'

The 'Jimmy Keath' of the Bureau of Fire intends to enjoy a Merry Christmas. There is one due to him in payment for the loss of two successive Christmas Days passed in a hospital suffering from injuries incurred at the greatest calamity recorded in the annals of the Bureau of Fire—the destruction of the Friedlander factory.

Thirteen members of the bureau went down to the scene of the fire on the morning of December 21-22, 1916. The destruction of the Friedlander factory, 231 North Howard street, on the morning of December 21-22, 1916, resulted in the death of three men and the injury of thirteen others.

William G. Glazier, now telephone operator at the high-pressure pumping station at 14th and West streets, was one of the latter.

After an unprecedented experience under the ruins of the burned factory, whose fire and walls collapsed like a house of cards, Glazier, then a hoseman on Engine No. 4, was dug out of the debris at 12:25 o'clock on Thursday, December 22, taken to St. Joseph's Hospital, to undergo a period of treatment lasting sixty-three weeks and to constitute an unparalleled case in medical as well as fire bureau records.

Monday, Christmas Day, 1916, will find the survivors of the 'Fires' enjoying a day at his home, 2311 North Howard street, showing no traces of his frightful ordeal save a harmless foot in a cast. He has returned to his duties at the bureau with his cheerfulness and his duties at the pumping station.

'I'm going to have a Merry Christmas this year, I hope,' said Glazier, smiling, when asked a more casual question. 'I've planned a Merry Christmas's year ago with my wife and son. But something happened that spoiled my plans and those of the following Christmas, as well. I mean the bombing of the factory. My wife and son went out that night and never returned to their stations. Forty or fifty others were taken to hospitals and most of them spent their Christmas in the accident ward.'

'Charlie Edelman, of our company, was one of those who never came back. George Wentz was one who was lucky enough to escape alive from Bodine street, where he was seriously hurt, but on Christmas Day, 1916, he died in St. Mary's Hospital from a broken back received when he was tossed off the wagon on Girard avenue on the way to another fire a couple of weeks before.

'No,' I'll never forget that Christmas or when I spent it in a hospital.

'My wife and I had planned to have a tree for our boy, then eight years old, and while it wasn't my day off we had everything prepared to celebrate the day as best we could.

'I was a two-meal man at that time. I got back to the station in East Montgomery avenue, below Girard avenue, on that Wednesday night about 9 o'clock. I hadn't had the house ready, but I had a tree when the 'joker' tapped off. It was from Box 294, at Third street and Girard avenue, one of our first-alarm runs. We got out in a hurry, and when we located the blaze Edelman and Wentz were on the floor with the line. We hadn't been in there but a few minutes when I heard a crash right above us. We dropped the line and ran for the window. Edelman and Wentz had reached it, but I didn't get into a window. My hat caught on a protruding gas jet and I went down. I don't remember anything for the next twenty minutes or so. When I came to, I found myself pinned down by the debris. I heard the tolling calling for help, so I yelled also.

'Presently I saw a reflection and heard the receding party working to reach us. They were above me and they let down a rope. I came to my feet and found myself one of the fallen timber, so I tried to grasp the rope with my left arm, but I couldn't move it. I found out later that my left arm and both ankles were broken.

'I lay on my back. Right above me were two pieces of shafting that made a sort of wedge. They looked as if they might come down any moment and crush me to death.

'Really, that shafting was my salvation, for it held up a broken rafter and prevented any more of the debris falling in on me.

'In the meantime the rescuers were trying to get a rope around my legs to haul me out that way. Right in the midst of it, down came the other wall. When I was most of the victims lost their lives. I had managed to swallow a little liquor that they let down to me on the rope, but when the second collapse came everything was cut off again.

'I called out for help a second time, but couldn't get a reply. I thought it was all up with me, but after a time I heard them coming nearer, and they answered my shouts. I could talk to them but we couldn't see each other then for the piles of debris. Our only communication was when they would pull on the line and I would answer back.

'After a while Doctor King, of the Medical-Chirurgical Hospital, took charge of my case. He dropped a tube with a light attached, and in this way let down liquid food and pumped oxygen into my mouth. Toward morning I felt my feet and legs burning. I thought I would be burned to death. The boys turned a line of water into where I was pinned down and relieved that danger, but the water kept backing up until it reached my armpits, and I feared I would be drowned. So they turned it off, leaving me in a pool of icy water that nearly froze me.

'When they had made a hole big enough one of the men was lowered by a rope, but he jumped on my broken leg and I had to ask them not to continue that effort to release me.

'I tried to raise one leg, but it fell back as if paralyzed. My left arm was bent back of me. I found out later it was caught in the machinery. Finally, they sawed through the machinery and I was lifted out. I had been in that position from 9:45 o'clock Wednesday night until 12:25 p. m. Thursday, almost fifteen hours.

'I can recall them pulling me in an ambulance and hearing the shouts as we galloped out Girard avenue to St. Joseph's Hospital. As they laid me on the table in the operating ward I remember looking at the clock and noticing that it was ten minutes to one. Then I went over.

'Doctor Herrman, of the hospital staff, laid some cocaine into me, and they wrapped me in several layers of blankets and hot-water bottles.

'ELEVEN DAYS OF DELIRIUM

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'For seventeen weeks my broken arm was in a fracture box. My shoulder and wrist were broken, as were my legs, and I had a six-inch gash in my head. I was six months in bed and then was allowed to sit up in a wheelchair.

'Then came the first operation on my leg. The back part of one foot had been wound away, and the doctors were afraid I would freeze to death from the effects of the long stay in the icy water of that cellar. It took five hours to thaw me out. I shook the bed as they carried me down, but finally they overcame this danger.

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